

happy to do that. There were 100 filibusters last year. And the American people should understand filibusters are more than just a word. It takes days and weeks of the Senate's time to work through that process.

We are going to get this bill passed, and we will complete the work on this appropriations bill—not because the Republicans deserve it, with their many earmarks in the bill. We are going to go ahead and do it anyway. We are going to do it because it is the right thing for the country.

There are many amendments that are germane. There are a number of amendments that were not germane postcloture. They would be considered. I told everyone that.

This is a game Republican Senators are playing. I think it is a very unfair game for the American people. I do hope the American people are watching, and they are. All you have to do is look at the LA Times. In Los Angeles this weekend, there was a front-page story indicating that the Republican Party, as a result of what is going on in the Senate, is at the lowest point in the history of the country for a political party. Why wouldn't they be?

We do have one brave soul who voted to get the bill out of the Finance Committee, and I appreciate her work. No cooperation on one of the most important issues facing the country in generations, health care reform. Do they have a plan? Of course not. It is the party of no, as indicated in this vote tonight.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on the vote just cast, as my friend well knows, we had worked on an amendment list not only last week but earlier today. We were down to what I thought was a manageable list. There is no one on this side of whom I am aware trying to prevent the Commerce-Justice-State bill from passing. So far this year we have had a very good amendment process. Members have been able to offer their amendments and get votes. I thought until about 5:15 this afternoon we were going to be able to get an amendment list. It broke down somehow in the discussions. So I wouldn't make more out of this than it is. We were very close to being able to finish this bill.

I suggest we continue to work on the amendment list, which was quite reasonable, and wrap up the bill in the very near future.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I appreciate the suggestion of my Republican counterpart. But we are going to get cloture on this bill, and we will handle the germane amendments. We have legislated on this bill for 5 days. That should be enough. The list they think is reasonable, someone should take a look at it and see how unreasonable it is. We will go ahead. We will do the regular order. We will get cloture on this bill, and we will handle the ger-

mane amendments—maybe. We don't have to handle the germane amendments. We don't have to deal with those. We might do that; we might not do it.

I think what has happened in the Senate is outrageous. I want to make sure the record is clear. I appreciate very much JOHN MCCAIN saying nice things about President Obama getting the Nobel Peace Prize. Another person who says he is running for President also said nice things about President Obama getting that. That was Governor Pawlenty. Obviously, Governor Pawlenty knows the American people think it is wrong for someone who receives this high honor, for people not to pat him on the back.

What has gone on in the Senate is as indicated in the New York Times last month: they are legislating out of spite. We are going to continue to work for the betterment of this country and move forward on the agenda this country needs to work on. We have had a successful year legislating. It has been extremely difficult. We have had a lot of hurdles to go over.

I appreciate the legislation we have passed. We only recently got 60 votes. We have had 58, so we have always needed a couple Republicans. And we have been able to get those but just barely. I appreciate the scowls from the other side as they vote with us.

We have a lot of important things to do. We are going to continue working on them. Health care has taken a lot longer than we had anticipated, but we will take that over the finish line. It will be hard, but we are going to do that. I hope we can do it with some support from the Republicans. It appears at this stage that we are not going to get any, other than maybe a couple of courageous souls. Maybe we will get three if we are lucky.

We have to do something about energy, an important issue. We are going to deal with that. We have to do something about regulation reform.

It would be a lot better for the American people if Republican Senators worked with us. Take, for example, the health care bill from the HELP Committee. You would think, after having accepted scores and scores of Republican amendments, that some Republican would say a nice thing about that HELP bill. Not a word. Every single member of the Republican Party who is a member of the HELP Committee voted against the bill.

It is pretty clear what is happening around here. As I indicated—for the third time—Republicans are legislating out of spite, and that is not good for this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. With all due respect to my good friend, the majority leader, I don't know what the vote we just had had to do with the President winning a Nobel Peace Prize. I congratulate him for that. I think all Members are proud that he was able to

achieve that. I don't know what it had to do with health care. What it had to do with is the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill.

We had agreed to all of the amendments on a list but one. We said to the majority that we would eliminate the one. So I don't know why they can't take yes for an answer. We basically had an agreement on our amendment list but for one amendment which they objected to, and we said we would take it off the list. It strikes me rather than having a spirited debate about health care and other matters, we ought to agree to the amendment list and finish the bill.

Mr. REID. Madam President, Thursday we waited virtually all day—all day—for them to come up with a list. It was never quite right. Never quite right. I was here late Thursday night, very late Thursday night. Everyone else had gone home. But the Republicans refused to OK a list. So I had no alternative but to file a motion to invoke cloture. The agreement is in their minds only. We have been very generous in allowing amendments that have nothing to do with bills this whole year. We were still willing to do that with this piece of legislation. This is part of a stall that we have had all year long, the stall all day Thursday. We had problems on Wednesday trying to come up with a list, and Thursday. Just never quite right.

Suddenly, today, we have a list. We are willing to drop an amendment. I don't know what amendment they are talking about dropping.

I have made my statement very clear. We have a pattern in the Senate by the Republicans that is abusive to the system. It is preventing the American people from getting work done. An example is this very important bill dealing with law enforcement—Commerce-Justice-State—FBI agents. Senator MIKULSKI has worked very hard. She is proud of this legislation. We are going to go ahead and get it done without the Republicans. We are going to go ahead and do it. Their earmarks are included. We are not going to take away any of their earmarks because we believe in fairness.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 20 minutes, followed by Senator HATCH for up to 20 minutes, and Senator GRASSLEY for up to 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, yesterday was a fateful day as we moved forward on health care legislation. Yesterday America's Health Insurance Plans, the insurance companies, unveiled a report criticizing the Senate Finance Committee's health reform legislation. This is the committee that negotiated with Republicans for 6 months; the committee that worked with the insurance industry for 6 months; a committee that has, frankly, not included a public option; a committee that has, frankly, bent over backwards to listen to insurance company interests.

America's Health Insurance Plans unveiled a report saying that as a result of this health care bill, health insurance premiums are going to increase by double-digit percentages as far as the eye can see.

Families USA pointed out that "this criticism by the insurance lobby gives hypocrisy a bad name."

AHIP, America's Health Insurance Plans, talked about rate shock; that if we move forward on this health insurance bill, Americans are going to be victimized by rate shock. Rate shock is a significant increase in premiums that insurance companies have inflicted upon Americans over the past decade, year after year after year.

I just got off the phone with a small business person in Cincinnati who has fought as hard as he possibly can. He came to my townhall meeting in Cincinnati, the most conservative part of the State, saying he needed to go in with other businesses in an insurance exchange, perhaps with a public option so he could get his rates in check. The insurance companies just raised his rates so dramatically that he is likely going to lose his insurance.

Rate shock is when between 2000 and 2009 average family insurance premiums for employer-based health coverage increase from \$6,700 to over \$13,073, an increase of 93 percent. Rate shock is when between 1999 and 2009, premiums for employer-sponsored insurance in my State—from Findlay to Gallipolis, from Galion to Youngstown—grew 108 percent. Rate shock is when 20 percent of middle-income Ohio families spend more than 10 percent of their income on health care. Rate shock is when between 2000 and 2008, the percentage of employees with an annual deductible greater than \$1,000 increased from 1 percent to 18 percent. One out of five Ohioans is paying a more than \$1,000 deductible. Rate shock is when since 2000, insurance costs for small businesses have increased 129 percent.

Who is going to provide the jobs in this economy to get us back on our feet as a nation? It is small businesses. Yet the insurance companies have more than doubled insurance premiums for small business, a 129-percent increase in less than a decade. Rate shock is when small business workers pay an average of 18 percent more in pre-

miums than those in large firms for the same benefits.

When America's Health Insurance Plans, the insurance industry, talks about rate shock, rate shock is what they have inflicted on the American public, what they have inflicted on large corporations, what they have inflicted on small business people, what they have inflicted on individual American workers, on individuals holding insurance plans.

Here is what rate shock, inflicting these huge premiums, has done. We know what it has done to the American public. We know what it has done to small business. We know what it has done to workers. We know what it has done to taxpayers. We know what it has done to local and State governments wrestling with insurance costs while providing other education, health care, public safety, public service services.

Here is what it has meant to insurance companies. Between 2000 and 2007, rate shock, inflicting high costs on ratepayers, has meant profits at 10 of the country's largest publicly traded health insurance companies going up 428 percent. They are doing just fine, thanks to the rate shock they are imposing upon American business and American individuals.

From 2007, CEOs of these companies collected a combined total compensation—10 companies, 1 year—of \$118.6 million, \$11.9 million each, 468 times more than the \$25,000 an average American worker made that year. The CEOs of the insurance companies made \$11.9 million each while they are saying to people: Sorry, you can't get insurance. You have a preexisting condition. Sorry, we are going to rescind your policies because you got too sick and you spent too much. Sorry, we will not cover you. We will cancel your policy because you are the wrong age or the wrong gender or live in the wrong place or you have the wrong disability.

The first half of this year, to top it all off, here is what rate shock meant to the insurance industry. AHIP spent \$3.9 million on in-house lobbying efforts and another \$500,000 on outside lobbying firms and consultants.

It is just a question of fairness. The question of fairness says to all of us, this is not right. People are paying more and more for their insurance. People are losing their insurance because they cannot afford it. People are getting cut off their insurance because of preexisting conditions. People are being discriminated against because of disability or gender or age or location. That—coupled with the salaries, the CEO compensation—all of that is not fair.

But what does that mean individually? Why, other than questions of fairness—which really matter. Another is productivity in our economy. As these health care costs are so burdensome to employers, they simply cannot hire people. I spoke today to a group. I had a roundtable, one of about 140 I

have done around Ohio, in my hometown of Mansfield, OH, with about 15 manufacturers, people who are struggling with all kinds of things.

They cannot get credit. They are victimized by the Chinese currency problems that American industry faces and our government will not do enough about. They are badly hurt by health insurance costs. So we know about the question of fairness. It is not fair what has happened to our workers, to our small manufacturers, to our companies, to our taxpayers, while CEOs are doing so well.

But let me talk about what this really means. I am going to read four or five letters from people in Ohio about why this matters, why this insurance crisis matters. I know the Presiding Officer gets letters—whether they come from Hanover or wherever they come from in her State—she gets letters such as this too. Most of the letters I get are from people who thought they had pretty good insurance, and then they get sick and their insurance is canceled or then they find out that one of their children has a preexisting condition or a spouse has a preexisting condition and they cannot renew their insurance or it gets so costly they cannot renew it. That is what comes through in so many of these letters.

Let me share a few of them. This is a letter from Robert from Lake County. It is a county just east of Cleveland on Lake Erie in northeast Ohio:

In 1986 my wife was terminally ill with cancer and several other illnesses. When I switched jobs and looked for new insurance, we were denied because of her pre-existing condition.

In 2001, when I was 58, I lost my job. When COBRA ran out, I was denied insurance based on my pre-existing conditions of diabetes and heart disease.

I managed to limp through until I turned 65 and became eligible for Medicare.

I'm sure the fear and anxiety I suffered over health insurance hasn't been at all beneficial to my overall health.

I have heard person after person—in talking to people one-on-one or looking at the letters they write or reading something they have written on the Internet—tell me they are not quite 65, they might be 55, they might be 62, and they just hope they can hold on until they are 65 so they can get a decent government-sponsored health plan, Medicare. That tells me why the public is demanding the public option. The public understands a public option—which is just an option—will make the insurance companies more honest.

A public option will not cancel people for having a preexisting condition any more than Medicare does. A public option will give people choice. It will discipline the insurance companies and keep costs in check.

We know, when you look at this report I just talked about—this AHIP report that talked about rate shock—that is as good an argument for a public option as any I have ever heard of because the insurance companies say: We are going to raise rates even higher